

CLAIMS

1. A system for sharing information among provider systems, comprising:
an interface for receiving information from one or more users to support a plurality of transactions each of which is performed with at least one of a plurality of provider systems;
5 a database in which the received information is stored; and
an information manager operable to provide the received information to the plurality of provider systems based upon the transaction performed.
2. The system according to claim 1, wherein the interface is a network interface coupled
10 to a network including one or more clients.
3. The system according to claim 1, wherein the database is a relational database (RDBMS).
- 15 4. The system according to claim 1, wherein the system provides the received information to the plurality of provider systems based upon a mapping between fields of the received information and expected fields of the provider.
5. The system according to claim 1, wherein the manager is operable to associate a
20 plurality of fields of the received information as a group, and perform operations on the group.
6. A method for sharing information among provider systems, comprising:
receiving information from one or more users to support a plurality of transactions,
25 each of which is performed with at least one of a plurality of provider systems;
storing the information; and
providing the received information to the plurality of provider systems based upon the transaction performed.
- 30 7. The method according to claim 6, wherein the step of receiving further comprises receiving the information over a communication network.

8. The method according to claim 6, wherein the step of storing includes storing the information in a database.

9. The method according to claim 6, further comprising providing the received
5 information to the plurality of provider systems based upon a mapping between fields of the received information and expected fields of the provider.

10. The method according to claim 6, further comprising associating a plurality of fields
of the received information as a group and performing operations on the group

10 11. A method for creating an online checkout process to enable a user to order from among a plurality of providers, comprising the steps of:

assembling a set of checkout questions from the plurality of providers;

identifying related checkout questions and assigning each set of related checkout

15 questions to a unique checkout object;

determining common checkout objects from providers of a like product or service;

assigning the common checkout objects to the like product or service;

assigning each non-common checkout object to a specific provider with which it is associated; and

20 assembling said checkout process comprising checkout questions, wherein the user is required to complete each question associated with a common object only once when ordering from any provider that offers the like product or service.

12. The method according to claim 11 further including the step of assigning at least one
25 field to each object.

13. The method according to claim 12 further including the step of assigning at least one attribute to each field, the attribute comprising at least one of font, font color, font size, bold, italics, underline and sequence.

30 14. The method according to claim 11 wherein the step of determining common checkout objects includes concluding that a checkout object is common to first and second providers if each of the first and second providers require a question included in the object.

15. The method according to claim 11 wherein the providers of the like product or service are those that provide a newspaper product or service.

5 16. The method according to claim 11 wherein related checkout questions are checkout questions having similar characteristics.

17. The method according to claim 11 further including the step, before the step of identifying related checkout questions, of removing from consideration during the identifying
10 step all unique questions.

18. An online system enabling transactions between a user and one or more of a plurality of providers, comprising:

15 a database that stores objects, each object comprising a unique checkout question or a related set of checkout questions from said plurality of providers, wherein objects that are common to a plurality of providers of a like product or service are assigned to that product or service such that each checkout question associated with a common object is asked of the user only once regardless of a number of providers of the like product or service with which the user may wish to enter into a transaction;

20 an interface for receiving information from the user in response to said questions; and said database further storing said information and providing said information to said one or more of the plurality of providers.

19. The system according to claim 18, wherein said database is a relational database
25 (RDBMS).

20. The system according to claim 18, wherein the interface is a network interface coupled to a network including said one or more users and said plurality of providers.

30 21. An online system for assisting users engaged in a residence move in carrying out transactions with one or more of a plurality of providers, comprising:

a database that stores objects, each object comprising a unique checkout question or a related set of checkout questions from said plurality of providers, wherein objects that are

common to a plurality of providers of a like product or service are assigned to that product or service such that each checkout question associated with a common object is asked of the user only once regardless of a number of providers of the like product or service with which the user may wish to enter into a transaction;

- 5 an interface for receiving information from the user in response to said questions; and
 said database further storing said information and providing said information to said
 one or more of the plurality of providers.

22. The system according to claim 21, wherein said database is a relational database
10 (RDBMS).

23. The system according to claim 21, wherein the interface is a network interface
coupled to a network including said one or more users and said plurality of providers.

15 24. The system according to claim 21, wherein the like product or service includes a
newspaper product or service.